ORIGIN/ACTION

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RM/R	REP	AF
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ARA	EUR	FE
NEA	CU	INR 5
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ARMY 5	CIA 10	NAVY 5
OSD 15	USIA 8	NSA 3

Action noted - 1st Doctor RM/R - file 12-4-63

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

AIRGRAM

(2)

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HANDLING INDICATOR

TO : Secstate WASHINGTON 1963 NOV 2 PM 1 31

INFO : Rome, Paris for Burns and James, ~~Rome for Burris~~ Thessaloniki

FROM : Amembassy ATHENS

SUBJECT : EDA Athens Rally

REF :

DATE 10/30/63

RM/AN ANALYSIS & DISTRIBUTION BRANCH DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR
REVIEWED BY DATE 6 MAY 1982
PA or FOI EXEMPTIONS

The Communist-line party EDA wound up its campaign for the November 3 parliamentary elections with a mass rally in Athens October 29. Although official estimates placed the size of the crowd at around 40,000, Embassy officers who attended the rally felt it was appreciably larger and that it at least equaled the crowd at the 1961 EDA rally of roughly 50,000. The gathering was well-organized and the participants seemed mildly enthusiastic. There were no incidents, and although the police were out in force, they remained unobtrusively in the background.

The main speakers at the rally were party theoretician Ilias Iliou and Communist hero Manolis Glezos, supplemented by other speakers including figures from the artistic world such as composer Mikis Theodorakis, who led the crowd in the singing of the national anthem. The over-all atmosphere resembled that of a county fair, pointing up the fact that the party lacks a single outstanding figure who could attract a large number of personal votes. Party president Passilidis was not present at the gathering, although a message from him was read to the crowd.

Iliou and the other speakers criticized the CU for rejecting their offers of collaboration but stressed that the only way to combat ERE is by "adoption of parallel lines of action." Iliou called for a large EDA vote in order to prevent other parties "from making slips or concessions

GROUP 4 - Downgraded at 3-year intervals. Declassified after 12 years.

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Drafted by: POL/JPOwens:cw

Contents and Classification Approved by:

Clearances:

dangerous to the interests of the people," while Glezos urged legalization of the Greek Communist Party (KKE). Frequent references to the late deputy Gregory Lambrakis on the part of all speakers drew the most cheers. The placards held by the EDA followers carried the usual Communist slogans such as "Democracy," Amnesty" (for the so-called political prisoners), "A nuclear-free Balkans," "Down with the regime of the three-wheel motorcycles," "Abolishment of para-state organizations", "Less military expenses--more bread," etc.

COMMENT: EDA thus became the first major party to finish its campaign with the traditional Athens mass gathering. While the EDA Athens turn-out will undoubtedly be smaller than those of ERE and CU, this is not necessarily an indication of the real EDA strength in the capital.

For the Ambassador:

H. Daniel Brewster

H. Daniel Brewster
Counselor of Embassy
for Political Affairs